

EFFECTS OF DANCING

Dr. William A. Hammond, of New York, Unhesitatingly Pronounces in Favor of the Amusement.

GOOD FOR BODY AND MIND

By Changing Partners Frequently
Dancing May be Most Heartily
Enjoyed—Praise for the German—The Virginia Reel.

New York, Jan. 1.—[Special correspondence of the Independent.]—I suppose there is more dancing done throughout the United States during January than in any other month of the year, and it may not, therefore, be deemed inappropriate if I restrict my remarks upon this occasion to the consideration of the effects of this amusement and exercise upon the systems of those who indulge in it.

Nothing is more wearisome to the average man or woman than exercise for the mere sake of the exercise. A walk in a familiar country, with nothing but trees and a dusty road to look at, while it may give exercise to the muscles, does this in a not much less mechanical way than if the limbs were put on a board and shaken by the vibrations of a steam engine. While a like amount of physical exertion in the streets of a large city, which are crowded with people and lined with shops resplendent with the most beautiful products of art, not only brings the muscles into play but at the same time stimulates the mind. The walk through Farmer Smith's lane is pretty much the same day after day, and eventually the mind becomes fatigued with its unvarying features. But Broadway, or Fifth avenue, or Chestnut street are always changing, and the mind is kept alert and amused, for, after all, the one factor that never fails is variety.

This susceptibility of the system to become wearied and, as it were, callous from a repetition of the same impression, is exhibited not only in the way I have mentioned but in many other interesting modes. The body, for instance, soon becomes habituated to the repeated dose of the same medicine, and it is necessary to increase the quantity from day to day in order to obtain the desired results. A first dose of an eighth of a grain of morphia will probably put most persons to sleep; a second dose of the same quantity acts less energetically, a third dose still more feebly, while a fourth has no appreciable effect whatever. In order to obtain sleep the dose now must be increased, and a like process must be gone through with from day to day so as to subject the body to a continually increasing influence.

A like condition exists in regard to pains, the body soon becoming accustomed to very annoying sensations unless they are rendered more intense or altered in quality. Even the most acute tortures fail to be experienced by the nerves, unless they are changed in some way or other.

There seems to be a natural tendency in all animals, including man, to skip or jump or dance when they desire to show pleasure. Our domestic animals, for instance, exhibit their delight by kicking out their limbs while still too young to manifest pleasure in any other way. Even the most savage nations of the present day make dancing one of the chief features of their rejoicing. Our ancestors at the very dawn of the historic period, and doubtless for many thousand years before, danced at their victories over their enemies, during their acts of worship of their deities, and when they met to feast over any event that gave them particular pleasure. No custom is more extensively and ineradicably shown by the monuments that have come down to us from antiquity than dancing. The walls of Assyrian and Egyptian temples and dwellings abound with representations of dancing men and women. The Bible contains many allusions to dancing as one of the chief means of showing pleasure.

But between the dancing of adults of the civilized portion of the modern world and that of older nations and of the savage people of our own times there is very considerable difference. Our remote ancestors danced to show their joy over some notable event and the savages of the present period are actuated by like motives. It is true that the ancients took pleasure in witnessing the saltatorial exercises of professional dancers, and several semi-barbarous nations of the present day look with great delight on the gyrations and contortions of their dancing girls. But there is nothing to show that any of these people danced for their own amusement. A Sultan of Mozambique or Zanzibar or some other such country was astounded on being introduced into a European ball room to see a king and other mighty personages, men and women, whirling round the room to the strains of a magnificent band of music. "When I want dancing," he said, "I am too august a sovereign to do it myself. I would feel degraded by such an act. I hire people to do it for me and I make pleasure in looking at them." Any one who has seen the dancing girls of India or Turkey will at once admit that so far from being a pleasurable exercise to them it is a painful labor, which has no compensation except the money they receive from those before whom they exhibit themselves.

But our men and women dance for the pleasure they derive from the act. Now let us see in what that pleasure consists.

In the first place, there is the association with others who have come to dance, which of itself affords a degree of exhilaration not to be despised. The sight of handsome men and beautiful and well-dressed women bedecked with jewels and other finery affords a no small measure of delight as well to the inexperienced in such matters as to those who have become accustomed, in a measure, to the excitement. Here variety plays its part, for it may safely be said that no two balls are attended by the same people dressed in the same way, and thus satiety is not produced. A certain degree of freshness is therefore inseparable from such affairs. Again, there is the brilliant light modified by passing through media of various colors; the ravishing music sensualized with all the art which those who compose the harmonious strains for waltzes and other dances know so well how to employ; the supper table loaded with the most appetizing productions of the cook's and confectioner's skill; the wines which, when taken with due moderation, cause just such degree of increased cardiac action as to send the blood a little more rapidly than usual through the brain and thus to quicken its action, to heighten its sense of enjoyment and to retard the coming of that weariness which sooner or later follows all excitement in excess of that which is habitual. A very slight increase in the amount of blood circulating through the cerebral vessels suffices to augment the acuteness of all the perceptions, and sometimes even to give brilliancy to minds that are ordinarily stupid. It is by no means necessary to use alcoholic liquors for this purpose, for a cup of coffee or tea, a few grains of quinine or the presence of a fever will produce a like result. Even the assumption of the recumbent posture will in many persons so increase the activity of the brain as to enable

Intellectual tasks to be accomplished which would otherwise be impossible. Many celebrated mathematicians and literary men have been obliged to lie down in order to work out their problems or to write their most effective poetry or prose. The managers of balls know very well what they are about when they provide champagne for those who have come to dance. They should take care, however, that there is not too great a profusion of this most exhilarating of beverages. It is a good friend when used with discretion, but a most malignant enemy when abused. A single glass too much will so deaden the sensibilities and blunt the perceptions as to render any kind of pleasure impossible.

Now, as to the dancing itself. I have no hesitation in saying that in it we have as powerful a means of exercising both the mind and the body at the same time as it is possible to obtain. The muscular movements extend over the greater portion of the body. They are not merely automatic but it is necessary that the attention be directed to their proper performance, for otherwise catastrophe of various kinds would be likely to result. But there is one feature that I cannot too strenuously insist upon, and it is this: The dancers who desire to obtain the utmost amount of pleasure from the beautiful and beautiful exercise in which they indulge should take special care to change their partners frequently. I have already called attention to the fact that the system soon becomes habituated to any particular kind of excitement. Variety is, in dancing as in all other things, the spice of life. There is only one exception to this precept, and that is that some people dance with other objects in view than the mere dancing. A couple who are in love with each other will dance together all night, but even they would have to confess if they told the truth that the last dance was not so pleasant as the first.

The man who invented the "german" knew what he was about when he devised a dance in which frequent changes of partners are necessary. The old-fashioned square dances were not without their advantages in this respect, and are too much neglected at the present day. The "Virginia reel" was wonderful in its capacity to give pleasure, but it was scarcely ever seen, except in some out-of-the-way country towns of the south.

Let the world, therefore, continue to dance; but in this, as in all other things, let it be guided by wisdom and moderation.

TAKING A CENSUS.

The Bill for Making the Count of Noses in 1890
—Cost of the Work.

Bradstreet: The house bill providing for the taking of the eleventh census is now before the senate, and though the census committee of that body has not acted upon it as yet its action upon it will probably not be long delayed. Already the attention of the committee is being drawn to the subject by the receipt of suggestions looking to the amendment of the house bill. Under that bill the census to be taken in 1890 is expected to be even more expensive than that taken in 1880. It is provided that the schedules of inquiries of the eleventh census shall be the same as those of the tenth census, with such changes of subject matter, recommendations and modifications as may be approved by the secretary of the interior. This provision, however, is a limitation. While the secretary of the interior has full discretion as to the schedules of inquiries, the number of volumes to be published is limited to seven. The subjects of these are to be as follows: (1) Population and Social Statistics relating thereto; (2) Products of Manufactures; (3) Mining; (4) Agriculture; (5) Mortality and Vital Statistics; (6) Valuation and Public Indebtedness; and (7) Statistics relating to railroads, corporations, express, telegraph and insurance companies. The publication of the tenth census, it will be remembered, embraced twenty-two volumes besides compendiums.

The bill limits the expenses of the census to \$5,000,000, exclusive of the cost of printing, engraving and binding. This sum is in excess of that required for the last census in spite of the restrictions upon publication in the plan for the next census. The last census cost the government \$5,802,750, and this included all expenses connected with the work, so that if the maximum sum provided for should be spent in addition to the cost of printing, engraving and binding, the eleventh census would be considerably more expensive than the tenth. It is expected that this increased expense will be rendered necessary by the expansion of population during the decade. The population of the United States will probably amount to 55,000,000 in 1890—an increase of about 15,000,000 over 1880. While touching on the question of expense it is interesting to notice the gradual increase in the work of the census since 1790, as revealed in the records of the expenses and publications of the Census Bureau from that date on. These statistics, which have lately been compiled for the use of congress, may be tabulated as follows:

Census year	Date of Publication	No. of Volumes	Cost.
1790	1792	1	\$4,387
1800	1802	1	60,599
1810	1813	2	178,445
1820	1823	2	308,525
1830	1832	1	308,525
1840	1841	4	833,371
1850	1850	4	1,320,027
1860	1860	4	1,922,623
1870	1872	4	2,336,711
1880	1888	24	5,802,750

These statistics of expense, taken in connection with the figures of population, afford a basis for one very interesting deduction. Not only has the absolute expense of taking and publishing the results of the census been greatly increased, but the cost per capita has been augmented over tenfold. The population of the United States in 1790 amounted to 3,929,214, and the cost of the census was \$4,387. This represents a cost per capita of 1.12¢. In 1880 the population amounted to 50,156,782, and the cost of the census was \$5,802,750, showing a cost per capita of 11.58¢, or more than ten times the cost per capita of the census of 1790. An increased cost per capita, indeed, seems to be a feature of every census.

Something for the New Year.

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